2: Kroeber E-5 (1930)1931 NU31 Seri NU31

Society

583 [595] Marriage is monogamous. The wife is bought, in spite of the poverty of the Seri. Santa Blanco paid 150 pesos in property for his wife. Chico Romero, a widower, paid more for his, a widow, "because she had three daughters, and a family with daughters is rich" (in expectation of bride prices).

591 562 The wife goes to live with the husband. A young couple lives with the young man's parents, perhaps in an annex to the house. "The man commands." Chico was emphatic on this point, and repeated that when his son married he would live with him, not with the girl's relatives. Both he and Santo have step-sons-in-law as well as daughters-in-law living with them, but this is because they are chief and boat-owner respectively; (and the sons-in-law are young).

633 [313] Copulation was said to take place immediately on marriage. McGee's statement of a period of continence being cited as the custom of a foreign tribe, the informant obviously wondered and laughed. Intercourse goes on during pregnancy; but not for some months after birth, for fear of a new pregnancy, which would be injurious to the child. A good man respects his wife at all times and does not constantly pursue her.

144 164 No half-breeds were seen, and the Seri declare they are free of venereal disease.

551 614 Nothing could be elicited from the informant as to anything like the group-inherited names of lineages, or clans, of the Yuman tribes.

768 When a woman dies, the widower may give the children to his dead wife's parents to raise. This is the only item learned that might point to McGee's "matriarchate"; but the informant may have been thinking of particular cases. His son lives with him, though he lost the boy's mother.

582 Cross-cousin marriage is as prohibited as that of parallel cousins. This is in accord with the sibling terminology for all cousins; but in view of the present small number of the tribe, the rule must work difficulty.

[587] A man does not marry his dead wife's sister. Apparently he may not. Nor is there levirate. The informant volunteered the question if marriage with step-daughters was permitted by other peoples. Being told of the Navaho custom, he seemed shocked.

606 183 Neither husband nor wife looks at or addresses either parent-in-law. In the isolated, small-group life of the Seri, this rule can hardly be adhered to with complete rigor, and its conspicuous carrying out was not observed; but then everything in their behavior is casual, informal, and slovenly.

607 The kinship system as recorded contains a note as to a woman not addressing her younger sister's husband by kinship term except

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

IV

BIRDS

136 Woodpecker—There are several species in the area but Gila woodpecker (*Centurus uropygialis*) is certainly one of them.
128 Hummingbird—Unspecified species, one of several occurring in the area according to Dr. Orr.

Economic Uses

262 Such use as had been made of the birds is largely in the form of an addition to the diet. Reading McGee, one gets the impression that the importance of the birds in the Seri diet, in contrast to the marine animals of all description, has declined greatly. We do know that in the past various birds and, most especially, the seagulls and the pelicans represented a significant item. But today out of the basic list of 24 species, only six has been reported as eaten and all, with an exception of the duck, in the past tense. The duck
*[825] evidently is the only bird which the Seri consider really fit to eat and yet, even here, there is temporary avoidance. Moreno told me that this bird "we eat only when we visit the island (Isla Patos).
[223] But we do not eat it in September because it is
[252] too lean. We like it in December when it is fat. We then kill it at night with stones. It is roasted."[1]

All other birds were reported as eaten only in the past and this has been expressed more or less as follows: sea-gull eaten a few years ago, cormorant 8-10 years ago, pelicans 30-35 years ago. This would mean that the pelicans had been discarded as food, at least according to the official Seri version, in the early twenties, before Kroe-
● 183 ber's visit. But the Seri disclaimers on the subject
262 of the bird diet are not entirely correct and reflect less the total rejection and more only low esteem in which these birds are held. For I have seen myself the sea-gull and the pelican eaten on few occasions when times were tough, and the
[261] food supply was non-existent, owing to the choppy
*[825] and windy seas. The Seris caught in the act of cooking the meagre flesh of the pelican or the seagull were obviously apologetic.

262 It is interesting that some of the birds present in the area, the quail or the woodpeckers, are not eaten although these birds figure prominently in the diet of some of the other groups. It may well be that the Seris consider them too small to bother.

[252] As far as I could find out, eggs of only two species of birds, the sea-gull and the heron, are collected, boiled and eaten. But the eggs of the

[1] His statement requires some explanation. There is no taboo on eating duck but the bird does not occur in Desemboque or any other place known to the Seris, with
[136] the exception of Isla Patos. Here these birds winter,
*[825] arriving in September and arrive worn out and lean, to recoup the fat, a few months later. The Seri unfamiliarity with their eggs is another indication that the birds come to Isla Patos only for the winter.

[P. 176]

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 MU31 Seri MU31

262 en simply because their flesh is disliked and unfit for human consumption. But it may also well be that some of them, especially of the giant variety, are not eaten simply because they are far too large to tackle and the Seris fear hunting them.

The Seris indicated also in some cases that larger specimens of fishes are eaten when they reach the size which would justify the effort. This is true of *Malacoctenus zonifer* which they indicated is "eaten when large," that is when at least 10 cm. long.

[226] Although only sometimes did the Seris specifically indicate that certain fishes are used for bait, it is very likely that almost all small or lesser fishes are so used.

262 178 In some cases the Indians indicated changes in preference for given fishes, with the time. For unexplained reason *Gymnothorax castenceus*, the morene, has been claimed to have been eaten in the past but not for the last 11 years. It isn't clear why the figure of 11 had been used and why suddenly in the early 40's they should stop eating it while the Mexican drool over it. But it may be also that here we have merely personal preference of the informants, as so often happens. As for the *pescara* it was formerly taken for food [439] but now it is merely sold to the Mexicans. This practice is increasing also to include the immense *mero*, even larger than the *pescara*. The fish is mainly sold but rarely eaten by the Seris themselves.

Food Preparation and Preferences

252 Food preparation is simple and in the main differs not at all from the preparation of other animal diet. The fish are either boiled whole or in part or else are roasted over slow fire on a grill. The entrails are usually discarded, but otherwise the beasts are eaten entire, eyes, brains and the rest, while the tiny fishlets are eaten complete with the scales and guts.

262 As for the preferences, as expected, there are some fishes that the Seri like better than others. The *bava* in the first place and the *pinto* in the second lead the list. The Seri prefer them to all others and consider them a real delicacy. On the other hand, there are some fishes that they'll eat only under protest, meaning when times are hard. *Girella simplicidens* is one such creature. The *Puerco* or *Cochi* is another. I have seen boat loads of puercos brought in with the other fish and un- [231] ceremoniously dumped out on the beach to the dogs. Literally! The Seris took to this fish only when fishing was poor during the wintry days when they were held ashore by the weather. Even • [183] then, they tried to eat the despised creatures on the sly, avoiding being seen doing this, and when I or the Mexicans picked up fresh fish from the beach to take home they laughed saying that we acted as a *cochi* (pig) would!

Other Economic Uses

* 825 237 322 One use made of fish concerns two species of sharks, the *chato* and *camposo*. Here, the informants claimed, the oil from their liver had been used in earlier times for polishing wood. This is

[P. 32B]